

Cam Gordon

City Council Member Second Ward

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Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 11-7-12

Cam's next Seward Office Hours: Tuesday, November 27th, 9:30-11:00am Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Voting on November 6
- 2) Constitutional Amendments Defeated
- 3) Birchwood Café Rezoning
- 4) Seward Café Rezoning
- 5) Tri State Bearing Building
- 6) PUC Rules Against Sherco
- 7) New Legislative Agenda Items
- 8) Openings on Boards and Commissions
- 1)Thanks to everyone in Ward 2 and Seward for voting on November 6. Turnout in Minneapolis was high and your participation in our democracy is vital to health of our city, state and country. Gratitude is also due to the many election judges and elections professionals that worked hard throughout a long day to ensure the best election possible. Many of the judges working yesterday are Seward residents. Many people waited in long lines in the cold and rain. I am sorry for any inconveniences and I thank you for patience, diligence, and determination to make your voice heard, as some residents had waits of an hour or even longer. Please know that in the coming weeks City will conduct a review of this election, including a precinct by precinct analysis of all polling place issues that will look at issues like long wait times, numbers of election judges per precinct, and space concerns.

I am aware of many concerns related to significant delays in west Seward, in the new Precinct 2 of Ward 6, that voted at Seward Square Apartments.

In my view, this situation was created by the Charter Commission's decision to redistrict west Seward into Ward 6 putting the Ward 6 portion of Seward is in two different legislative districts, necessitating that the two areas be in different precincts of unequal size. I did support having the polling place at Seward Square Apartments because, given the short time frame between when the new wards were approved and when we needed to give notice of the polling places, we were not able to find a new polling location for the folks who live in the new 2-9, which meant that those residents had to keep voting in Seward Tower East. The building does not have space for two polling places. I am committed to find a new polling location for 2-9 because this is an unacceptable long-term solution. Also, there is a substantial population of disabled people living in Seward Square Apartments who have voted in their building for at least a decade, and I am concerned about requiring them to go to a building blocks away. Matthews Center is also a good option but is in the far southeast corner of the precinct. Elections staff tried hard to make this location work, making a block of 9th St S into voter-only parking, finding off-site parking at several local businesses, and doing special outreach to residents of Seward Tower East who found themselves in the strange position of having a polling place in their building at which they could not vote. When I heard about the delays yesterday, I contacted Mr. Carl and requested additional support for the Seward Square precinct. It sounds like the situation improved somewhat after this support arrived. The number of votes cast in 6-2 (1,648) was actually lower than the citywide average. Of the 119 precincts in Minneapolis, at least **70** had **more** voters than 6-2, including some with more than 3,000 voters. I do not yet have solid data on how many voters in 2-6 registered on election day, but anecdotally, it sounds like a large number of same-day registrants may have caused much of the delay. I will advocate that Elections staff ensure – wherever the polling place is – that there are additional

same-day registration resources in this precinct, and that same-day registrants and pre-registered voters are separated into discrete lines as soon as possible, to shorten the wait for pre-registered voters. I welcome your input on polling places for west Seward, and I will share what I hear from you with both Elections staff and Sixth Ward Council Member Robert Lilligren. However, I want to share a caution. Due to the unfortunate – and completely avoidable – overlap between Ward and Legislative boundaries, there is not likely to be a perfect solution in precinct 6-2. It is one of many negative results from a misguided redistricting.

- 2) I am very pleased that both of the the constitutional amendments to ban same-sex marriage and require voters to have a photo ID failed yesterday. I'm proud that the City Council took a strong, unanimous stand against both amendments, and that the Second Ward voted so conclusively against them. 84% of Ward 2 residents voted against the marriage amendment, and 81% voted against the voter ID amendment.
- 3) The City Planning Commission has unanimously voted to grant the variance requests tied to the Birchwood Café's proposed expansion and to recommend that the Council rezone the property to C1. This rezoning application to come before the Zoning and Planning committee tomorrow, November 8th. With the Seward Neighborhood Group, the Seward Civic and Commerce Association, City Planning staff and the Planning Commission all strongly recommending this rezoning, I intend to support it and expect it to pass. I will continue to listen to the concerns of the near neighbors and encourage the Birchwood, other nearby businesses, and the City to do what we can to address the issues that have been raised.
- 4) The City Planning Commission has unanimously granted the Seward Café's request to rezone their parcel to C2, to allow them to request a beer/wine license that can include general entertainment.
- 5) Hennepin County has decided to allow the Leifman Memorial Foundation's to repurchase the old Tri-State Bearing building on 25th St E. The sale is conditional on finishing the environmental review and selling the building to a new owner within 120 days. City Zoning staff have made clear that any future use of the building will require a change of nonconforming use certificate.
- 6) I testified at a Public Utilities Commission hearing in favor of requiring Xcel Energy study how clean energy options can replace the dirty Sherco coal plant. I am very pleased to say that the PUC has ruled in favor of my position. I view this as a major win for clean energy, and a possible phase-out of a coal plant that pollutes our air and water.
- 7) The Council's Committee of the Whole has discussed a set of items for the City's 2013 Legislative Agenda that include some interesting new requests. The first is improvements to the Sewer Availability Charges that make it so difficult and expensive for many Longfellow-area businesses to open and expand. Also on the list are a new host of City positions on issues related to bicyclists and pedestrians. If passed next week, Minneapolis will support the following changes:
 - More flexible state lane-width standards that will allow us to design and build streets that safely meet the needs of all who use them
 - Increased funding for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and programing, including programs that seek to incentivize innovation in bicycling infrastructure, with flexibility on design standards
 - Complete Streets policies at all levels
 - Local flexibility to reduce speed limits below 30 MPH for both local residential streets and when accommodating bicycling infrastructure
 - A state level study of the economic impact of bicycling
 - Legislation to make clear that drivers should yield to bicyclists in bike lanes
 - Adding bike lanes to the list of prohibited locations for stopping, standing, or parking a vehicle
- 8) There are more than 186 open positions on 24 boards and commissions that the City Council and Mayor will appoint this fall. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. Boards/Commissions. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions visit http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/index.htm To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.